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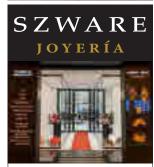
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# Ballot box or beach?

*Madrid.*— A Spanish talk show host's gesture of disbelief, with eyes rolled and arms thrown high, upon hearing Monday's announcement of a snap general election at the height of the summer holiday season has gone viral in Spain. The reaction of Angels Barcelo to the

**Balearics** 

takes a turn

to the right:

July 23 election date "represents us all", Cadena SER radio station said under the video posted on its website, triggering caustic user comments about likely low turnout or pitying those

who will have to work.

Indeed, Spain has never before held national elections in July, when schools are closed for the summer and families flee the sweltering heat of big cities such as Madrid or Seville for the beach.

The election means tens of thousands of people will have to work at polling stations and post offices, which might clash with holiday plans and cause logistical problems.

Political analysts, tourism officials

and trade unionists consulted by Reuters expected little impact on travel, but instead a fall in voter turnout and a rise in mail-in ballots - adding to concerns about alleged voter fraud in last Sunday's regional elections. "People are not cancelling their

holidays to stay and vote, but many will opt for postal voting," said political scientist Pablo Simon of Madrid's Carlos III University.

He added that lower turnouts

generally favour political parties enjoying good momentum.

"Right now the good momentum is on the side of the People's Party," Simon said, referring to Spain's mainstream conservatives, "but things could

change". A PP source said the election date "when half of Spain will be on holiday" had caused surprise and concern within the party, which hopes to oust Socialist Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez in the election.



Photo: JOAN LLADO

#### Mayor-elect promises to open beaches all year

Calvia.—He may not be mayor yet, but the conservative Juan Antonio Amengual (Partido Popular) has outlined plans to make Calvia (Magalluf, Santa Ponsa, Palmanova, Paguera, etc) an all-year-round holiday destination with the beaches being opened and cleaned 12 months of the year.

It could be said that Amengual will become mayor through the back door. The present socialist mayor, Alfonso Rodriguez, secured enough votes for 12 councillors compared to the Partido Popular's eight but the socialists failed to gain an overall majority (13 councillors), which will mean that a pact between Partido Popular and the far-right Vox (five councillors) is on the table. In fact, talks have already started.